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## DOMESTIC COOKING GAS PRICE RAISED BY ₹25 PER CYLINDER

**This is the second straight month of a price increase for LPG. Rates were increased by ₹25.50 per cylinder on July 1 as well**

**LPG RATES MORE THAN DOUBLE IN SEVEN YEARS**

After the latest hike, which came into effect on August 17, a 14.2-kilogram domestic cylinder would now cost ₹859.50 each in Delhi and Mumbai, ₹875.50 in Chennai, and ₹886.50 in Calcutta. LPG prices vary from state to state owing to local taxes. Cooking gas prices have more than doubled in the past seven years - the retail selling price was ₹410.50 on March 1, 2014

**DIESEL PRICES CUT BY 20 PAISE PER LITRE**

- Each household is eligible for 12 cylinders per year under the government subsidy scheme. The Centre gives marginal freight subsidy for customers in remote locations
- Meanwhile, diesel prices were cut by 19-21 paise across the country, while petrol prices remained unchanged | P13

**₹165**

CUMULATIVE PRICE INCREASE IN COOKING GAS SINCE JANUARY 1

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

# Taliban crush rare dissent, explore govt formation

Three protesters shot dead in Jalalabad; Karzai meets militia leaders

**Access to central bank reserves blocked**

The Taliban will not have access to most of the nation's cash and gold stocks, central bank chief Ajmal Ahmady said. The Da Afghanistan Bank has $9 billion in reserves, but most of it is held in banks overseas, out of reach of the Taliban, Ahmady said

**Samajwadi MP booked for sedition**

Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rehman Barq has been booked for sedition following his recent remarks allegedly defending the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and equating it with India's freedom struggle P7

**Taliban stop export, import with India**

The Taliban have stopped movement of cargo through the transit route of Pakistan, Ajay Sahai, director-general, Federation of Indian Export Organisation, said. "Imports from Afghanistan come via the transit route of Pakistan," news agency ANI quoted him as saying

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A day after the Taliban sought to moderate their messaging, they crushed voices of dissent building up in Afghanistan by shooting at protesters at Jalalabad on Wednesday, killing three persons and injuring many others.

Dozens of people who had gathered at the site, including video journalists covering the protest, were badly injured as they were attacked with batons. According to reports, the residents of Jalalabad, around 150 km from Kabul on the main road to Pakistan, were trying to raise the national flag on the eve of Afghanistan's Independence Day, which commemorates the end of British rule in 1919.

The Taliban militants were enraged as the crowd tried to lower the Taliban flag and raise the Afghan tricolour. Video footage later showed them violently attacking the crowd.

The process of government formation gathered pace on Wednesday after Taliban cofounder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar returned to the country after 20 years. Tipped to be the next president, Baradar had led the nine-member Taliban delegation hosted by China in July. On Wednesday, ex-Afghan president Hamid Karzai held talks with Anas Haqqani of the Haqqani Network, a powerful Taliban faction. Karzai was accompanied by Abdullah Abdullah, the head of the Afghan National Reconciliation Council. The meetings were reportedly to explore the possibility of forming an inclusive government with non-Taliban members.

On Wednesday, the situation in Kabul remained grim with many Afghans and foreign nationals unable to reach the airport with access roads blocked. Britain's ambassador to Kabul Laurie Bristow warned that the window for evacuation is closing fast and his team has got "days, not weeks" to pull out British nationals and Afghans who worked with UK forces.

Many Indians are also still stuck in the war-torn country. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the developments and the priority is on ensuring the security and safe return of Indian nationals.

There were also reports of Salima Mazari, one of Afghanistan's only three women governors, being taken into custody by the Taliban.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday disclosed that it has granted refuge to former president Ashraf Ghani and his family. P9,12

Former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, Haqqani group leader Anas Haqqani, National Reconciliation Council head Abdullah Abdullah and others meet in Kabul on Wednesday to explore government formation | AP

## WILL ENSURE SAFETY OF AFGHANS IN KARNATAKA: HOME MINISTER

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

HOME Minister Araga Jnanendra on Wednesday assured citizens of Afghanistan staying in Karnataka that the State Government will ensure their safety and take up the issue of their visa extension with the Centre as the visas of many of them will expire in the coming days.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event on Wednesday, Jnanendra said there are 339 Afghan nationals in Karnataka, of which 192 are students. "It has come to my notice that they are all worried about their future after the Taliban took over their country. On humanitarian grounds, the state will extend all possible support and protection to them," he said.

Some of the Afghan nationals had expressed concerns over their visas expiring soon. "As the Union Government decides on extension of visas, I will take up the matter with the Chief Minister and the Centre," he said.

Meanwhile, the State Government has appointed a senior IPS officer of the rank of Additional Director General of Police to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for the evacuation of Karnataka residents stranded in Afghanistan. P4

GLASS CEILING OFF

## Women finally get a shot at NDA's exam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday opened yet another door for gender equality by allowing women to take the National Defence Academy (NDA) entrance test scheduled to be held on September 5. The interim order would be subject to confirmation later, a bench of justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy said. It directed the Union Public Service Commission to issue an appropriate notification complying with the order and give it due publicity.

Petitioner Kush Kalra has sought a direction to the authorities to allow female candidates to appear in the NDA and Naval Academy exam. The Centre's counter-affidavit sought to block the demand, saying it was a policy decision that should not be interfered with. But the bench called it out, saying the argument was absurd. "Will the Army act on after the judicial orders are passed? We will then pass an order, if that is what you want. I have this impression right from the HC that till an order is passed, the Army does not believe in doing anything voluntarily," the bench observed.

## Delhi court clears Tharoor in Sunanda death case

ENS @ New Delhi

MORE than seven years after businesswoman Sunanda Pushkar was found dead in a luxury hotel here, a Delhi court on Wednesday cleared her husband and Congress leader Shashi Tharoor of all charges. Tharoor, who was present when Special Judge Geetanjali Goel pronounced the order in a virtual hearing, thanked the judge and said it had been 'absolute torture for last seven-and-a-half years'.

Pushkar, a prominent face in Delhi circles, was found dead in a suite of a luxury hotel on the night of January 17, 2014. The couple had been staying in the hotel as Tharoor's official bungalow was being renovated.

Tharoor, who was charged under IPC sections related to cruelty and abetment to suicide but was not arrested, later in the day tweeted that his faith in the judiciary stands vindicated.

EXPRESS READ

**Will strive to make state a leader in industry: CM**

BENGALURU: Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday said the government will strive to put Karnataka on top of the country's industrial map. "In the coming days, we will work to put Karnataka in the number one spot on the industrial map," he said. P4

## Potential first woman CJI in elevation to SC

COLLEGIUM'S PICKS

A S Oka
Karnataka HC CJ

Vikram Nath
Gujarat HC CJ

J K Maheshwari
Sikkim HC CJ

Hima Kohli
Telangana HC CJ

B V Nagarathna
Karnataka HC judge

M M Sundresh
Madras HC judge

C T Ravikumar
Kerala HC judge

Bela M Trivedi
Gujarat HC judge

P S Narasimha
Senior Advocate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

FOR the first time ever, three women judges were together recommended for elevation to the Supreme Court, one of whom could go on to become the first woman Chief Justice of India (CJI). They were part of the nine names cleared by the five-member Supreme Court collegium, whose decision was uploaded on Wednesday. The recommendations are subject to approval by the Centre.

Justice B V Nagarathna, the senior-most judge of the Karnataka High Court, has the chance of becoming the first woman CJI in in September 2027. The other two women judges picked for elevation are Justice Hima Kohli, Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court and Justice Bela Trivedi, the fifth in seniority in the Gujarat High Court.

Two other chief justices — Justice C T Ravikumar of the Kerala High Court and Justice M M Sundresh of the Madras High Court — were recommended for promotion by the collegium, which met on Tuesday. Besides, senior advocate P S Narasimha has been selected for appointment directly to the bench. If his name is cleared, Narasimha would become only the sixth lawyer in India to be elevated to the SC bench directly from the Bar. The last such elevation was of Justice Rohinton F Nariman, who retired last week. Narasimha is a former Additional Solicitor General.

With the retirement of Justice Navin Sinha on Wednesday, the strength of judges in the top court came down to 24 as against a sanctioned strength of 34, including the CJI. No appointment has been made to the Supreme Court after CJI Ranjan Gogoi retired on March 19, 2019.

**ONLY 8 WOMEN JUDGES IN TOP COURT SO FAR**

Since independence, India never had a women Chief Justice of India and over the years, the top court has appointed only eight women judges starting from M Fathima Beevi, who was made a judge in 1989. At present, only Justice Indira Banerjee is a lone woman judge in the top court. Across 26 high courts in the country, there are only 82 women judges out of 1,079 judges. The Madras High Court tops the list with 13 women judges.

## Colleges have till Oct 1 to prep for NEP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA is pushing hard to be the first state to implement the National Education policy-2020 (NEP-2020) in higher education institutions. Degree colleges in the state have now been given time till October 1 to complete the admission process under the new policy, after which classes will officially begin, Higher Education Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan announced on Wednesday.

The dates for college admission will be announced on August 23 when Karnataka will officially launch the implementation of NEP-2020 and release the guidelines, becoming the first state to do so. The NEP-2020 guidelines will be announced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and CM Basavaraj Bommai will be part of the programme.

Dr Ashwath Narayan's statement comes in response to statements from colleges that admissions had already begun, and some of them had even commenced classes in the online mode, but were now considering halting them as they were not in accordance with the NEP. Many private colleges, however, have continued with online classes, while some have suspended them, awaiting guidelines. P7

| NATION | AUG 17 | AUG 18 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 25,166 | 35,178 |
| Recoveries | 36,831 | 37,259 |
| Deaths | 437 | 448 |

| K'TAKA | AUG 17 | AUG 18 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 1,298 | 1,345 |
| Recoveries | 1,835 | 1,558 |
| Deaths | 32 | 22 |

Sri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister
Sri Basavaraj S. Bommai
Hon'ble Chief Minister
BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
BBMP DOCTORS AT YOUR DOOR STEP,
YOUR HEALTH IS OUR GOAL...
BBMP Doctors will conduct door-to-door health assessment
Launching of programme in 54 wards at a time which includes 2 wards of each assembly constituency..
16-08-2021 Onwards
This will include:
* Collecting details of family members & their health condition.
* General awareness on health issues and on keeping safe from Covid-19 virus.
* Providing necessary health care support.
Health Team Composition:
Each team will have one Doctor and supporting medical staff
Stay safe from Covid, follow BBMP Advisories and Guidelines
"Health for all, Health everywhere"
STAY SAFE FROM CORONA
Wear Mask
Maintain Hand Hygiene
Follow Physical Distancing
No Spitting in Public Place
For More Details Contact:
080-22221188
080-22975595
080-22100031
Toll-Free helpline: 1533
DIPR/BBMP/59/2021-22